CAMPAIGN AGAINST
carF
RACISM & FASCISM

No 36 February/March 1997 80p

Just as the dead are usually nameless, easy to forget, so too are their killers. For 'illegals' come and go like phantoms in a parallel world

SPECIAL FEATURE ON DEATHS IN EUROPE

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Cover shows the funeral in the Netherlands of the Iranian asylum-seeker, Amir Salehi, who set himself on fire in protest at long asylum procedure. Photo and details on pp 5, 6 and 9 by Guus Dubbelman.

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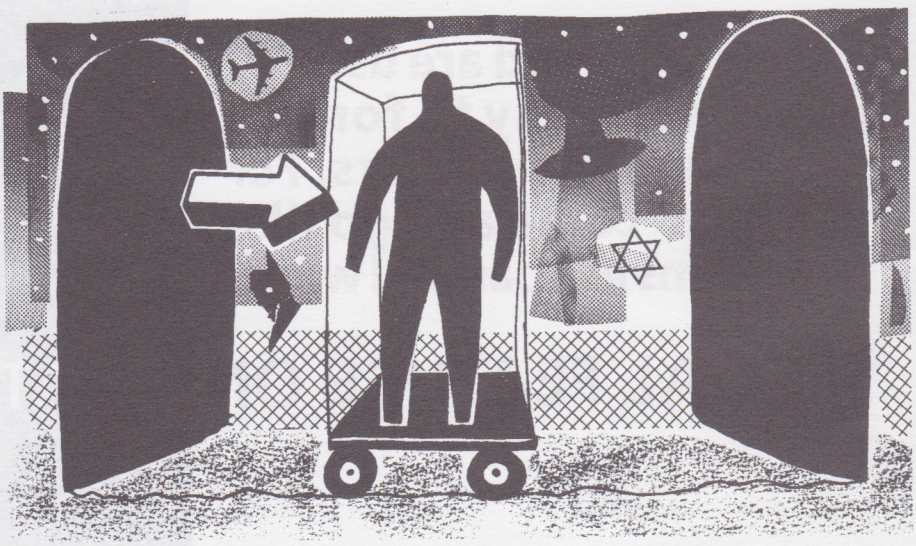
EDITORIAL

According to the European Commission, the aim of this year's European Year of Action against Racism is to 'encourage reflection and discussion on measures required to combat racism and xenophobia' and to promote 'tolerance, respect and understanding'. Where better to start the process of reflection than with the issues thrown up by CARF in its annual review of deaths caused by racism?

Why did 358 people have to die in 1996 alone as a direct result of the visa controls and carrier sanctions which, in denying legal travel to refugees and immigrants, promote the tawdry traffic in human beings? And why did 32 asylum-seekers have to commit suicide, through being holed up in European detention centres or left destitute on the streets, waiting hopelessly month after month for their asylum applications to be 'considered'?

Instead of acting to remove the causes of this human misery, governments across Europe are adding daily to the lists of the rightless and the de-citizenised. New legislation which would introduce a residence requirement for the German-born children of immigrants was announced by the German government at the start of 1997. Former guestworkers and rejected asylum-seekers are already subject to special repatriation programmes across Europe. The rights of seasonal migrants in the Mediterranean countries are under attack. New measures provide for the deportation of non-EU students. Non-EU workers in the welfare state, such as doctors and teachers whose services are no longer required, are under threat. Those who don't leave fall into the growing ranks of the undocumented, the 'sans-papiers', with no official existence and no rights, subject to super-exploitation and fearful of deportation.

'Tolerance, respect, understanding' – none of these is remotely achievable when basic human rights are eroded and inhumanity institutionalised. What anti-racists should do in this Year of Action against Racism is to turn the tables on European governments by taking the 'sans papiers' message into the citadel of the European Commission: **'Undocumented but not illegal'.**



David Drew

Fast for freedom

On 6 January, 74 immigration detainees being held at Rochester prison in Kent began a hunger strike. For the first time in the UK, a hunger strike of asylum-seekers has managed to seize national attention.

The hunger strike united Nigerian, Algerian, Zairean and east European detainees, and the attempts of the prison service to isolate the African detainees who started the protest, by portraying them as trouble-makers, failed when east Europeans joined them.

CARF spoke to one of the participants in the hunger strike after he was released on bail:

'I spent 18 months in prisons and detention centres until I got bail in January. In Nigeria I was involved with the Campaign for Democracy and I was beaten by Nigerian soldiers. The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture examined me and submitted reports about the bruises on my head.

SET THEM FREE!

'In Rochester prison the conditions were dreadful, much worse than a detention centre – we were not even allowed incoming phone calls. There was a simple reason for our hunger strike – everyone wants freedom. We have committed no crime. People have been pushed to the wall, the prison officers treated us like dogs. The hunger strike is the only way we can express our views in this prison environment, this military regime. Whatever this system may do to us, people said "come what may, I'm standing up for myself".

'Even criminal prisoners have more rights than us and are treated better. Even so, they were very supportive of our protest, saying "I know why I'm here but there is no reason for you to be here". It's ironic that I escaped prison in Nigeria to be locked up here. If I had committed a crime I would do my time – at least a criminal knows when he will be released, but this, this is mental torture.'

Three weeks after the hunger strike began, 11 detainees were still refusing food and water and were close to death. Representations to the Home Office from church leaders, human rights campaigners and even the British Medical Association calling for the freedom of the detainees, were met with indifference. Junior minister Ann Widdecombe is, it appears, prepared to have the deaths of innocent people on her hands. There was outrage when, in an attempt to discredit the hunger strike, details of the alleged criminal record of one of the detainees involved were released.

As CARF goes to press at the end of January, one detainee, a Nigerian pastor, has been persuaded to take water so that he can live to fight for his asylum application. Others have been dispersed around the country, including an alleged ringleader who has been moved to a high security prison. Support groups have held several protests outside Rochester prison. The hunger striker CARF spoke to told us, 'We heard the shouts and chanting and we were so pleased to hear of your protests, but the only way we can respond is by banging on the windows and walls.' ■

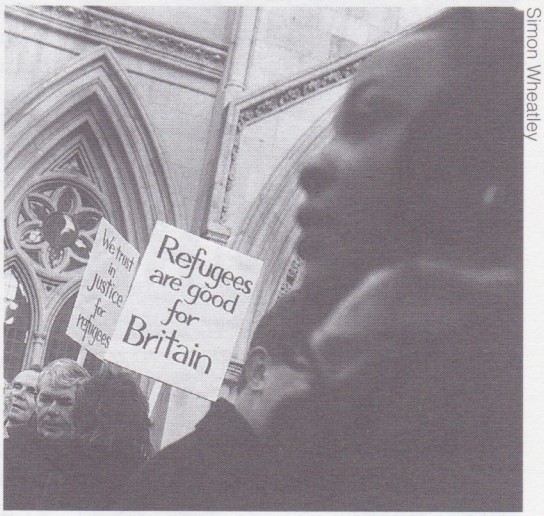
Medway Detainees Support Group
c/o 16 New Road Avenue, Chatham,
Kent ME4 6BA.

STATEMENT FROM THE HUNGER STRIKERS

'We have clearly noted all previous unsuccessful attempts to resolve our unlawful imprisonment without trial, hearing or process, which should allow us the right to a fair and prompt hearing. Instead the prison authorities hide behind the excuse that they answer to immigration authorities who in turn use the judicial process as their reason for continued unlawful imprisonment. We in turn remain imprisoned under the prison regime answering to prison discipline and orders without having committed crimes, and answering to a system in which we have no voice...

Numerous suicide attempts, hunger strikes and official complaints by individuals have gone unheard. The response of the prison authorities and immigration is the forceful removal of the individual to the segregation unit, placed under prison regulations without hearing or trial pending removal to another prison. In some extreme cases individuals are removed to a hospital without their consent so as to shift the prison's responsibility for action...

We are therefore left with no option but to go on mass hunger strike indefinitely.'

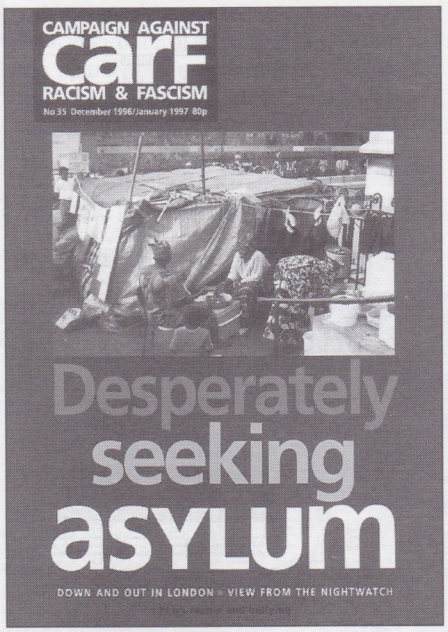


Simon Wheatley

Benefits challenge

On Monday 13 January members of the Asylum Rights Campaign (ARC) and Central London Interfaith Refugee Network (CLIRNET) began a vigil outside the Royal Courts of Justice in London. They maintained their presence until Thursday 16th, and will return when judgement is due on the government's appeal against the decision that local authorities must provide shelter to asylum seekers in the UK. It was the ruling of Justice Collins in October 1996 which obliged local authorities to make this most basic of humanitarian provision. The judge found it 'impossible to believe that parliament intended that an asylum seeker... be left destitute, starving and at risk of grave illness and even death'. Almost immediately the government began to prepare its appeal against the ruling, while failing to provide additional funds to local social services departments to meet the costs of housing and feeding asylum- seekers. In a message of support to the vigil, the leader of Southwark Council wrote of the difficulties created by the government, preventing it from showing compassion to asylum-seekers. Yet the smug confidence of the government, that the ruling will not stand on appeal, has been matched by a determination on the part of campaigners and activists to see that it does. In spite of freezing temperatures, ARC and CLIRNET members and other demonstrators were determined to remind Lords Justices Waite and Henry that there will be no respite from the cold for asylum seekers if they are returned to the streets. ■

The vigil will reconvene when the judgement is due. For further information contact CLIRNET on 0171 328 9574.


CAMPAIGN AGAINST
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No 35 December 1996/January 1997 80p
Desperately seeking asylum
DOWN AND OUT IN LONDON • VIEW FROM THE NIGHTWATCH

Racism

It's becoming very difficult to compile our annual review of deaths across Europe as racism has gone into the under-world of the undocumented. The brutal racism that characterises the lives of the 'sans papiers' is a theme that emerges again and again, crossing all categories, in this harrowing tale of murder and institutional indifference and neglect.

UNDOCUMENTED DEATHS

First, there are the deaths we can't record, undocumented because the deceased are Europe's non-people: the de-citizenised, the 'illegals', the 'sans papiers'. And just as the dead are usually nameless, easy to forget, so too are their killers. For 'illegals' come and go like phantoms in a parallel world. Officialdom only cares what goes on in this world when its excesses spill over into *their* world.

So valuable have identity papers become in Fortress Europe that some are even prepared to kill for them. When the bodies of three immigrants, whose identities are unknown, were discovered in separate murder incidents in Spain over the peak summer period for migrant agricultural labour, the hidden message in the newspapers was that these deaths did not need to be investigated. In one case, that of a north African seasonal worker killed only two days after he arrived in town, newspapers reported that he was probably mugged for his identity papers.

Such deaths, if reported at all, are usually hidden in the small print of newspapers that few will bother to read. Just how uninterested Europe is in the human rights of the 'sans papiers' is indicated by the treatment of immigrants' deaths in the Italian newspapers, *il manifesto* and *Corriere della Sera.* After **Baba Ossen Seidu** was killed, probably by the police, in Castelvolturna, north of Naples, the newspapers mentioned in passing that immigrants 'often die ... and are often killed' in this area. But the newspapers do not investigate how many have died, and why – or link these deaths to the mounting evidence of new Mafia ventures into human smuggling and extortion from immigrants.

Criminals reap Fortress Europe's rewards

The underworld criminals who ruthlessly exploit the trade in human beings, charging vast sums to smuggle migrants into western Europe, also, quite literally, enslave undocumented workers once inside Europe. New eastern European mafias are joining the old-established western Mafiosi to force women into prostitution, children into begging rings. Since few care to investigate the experiences of these modern-day slaves, their lives – and deaths – can only be gleaned, shorn of detail, from the briefest of newspaper stories. In Turin, Italy, the charred remains of a young girl, discovered in August 1996, were believed to be those of an Albanian victim of a feud between rival gangs eager to control the lucrative prostitution trade.

Women lured to Europe, promised good jobs, find themselves caught in a vicious trap. Without papers, without legal status, they are easy prey for gangs who force them to work off the cost of their passage. (Other undocumented workers, like the Chinese garment and catering workers in Paris and Madrid find themselves in a similar position.)

Illegality breeds blackmail, as Altagracia Reyna Medina, a 32-year-old domestic worker from San Domingo, found to her cost. She paid an Italian citizen whereby he was paid to marry her so that she could stay in the country. But as he wanted to marry again, he soon became dissatisfied with the arrangement and killed Medina during an argument. A divorce for her would have meant certain deportation.

Governments create 'illegals'

It is the international crime syndicates that benefit from European immigration and asylum policies, and changes to the law mean that new categories of 'illegals' are being created each day. As 1997 began, Germany introduced a residence requirement for the children of immigrants born in the country. Everywhere the ranks of the 'sans papiers' are growing. Former guest workers and rejected asylum-seekers are the subject of special repatriation packages; the rights of seasonal and migrant workers are under attack; new measures provide for the deportation of non-EU students; and

goes underground

non-EU workers within the welfare state – doctors and teachers whose services are no longer required – are also under threat.

SUICIDES/INSTITUTIONAL NEGLECT

By far the largest category of documented deaths in 1996 comprise the suicide of asylum-seekers, mostly in detention, to which we add nine cases of death due to institutional neglect. In 1994, there were seven recorded suicides; in 1995, there were 15. But in 1996 this figure has more than doubled. Of the 32 deaths recorded here, 15 took place in the Netherlands, 10 in Germany, two each in Norway and France and one each in Sweden, Italy and Austria.

The end of human rights

As European governments add more and more countries to their 'safe countries' lists, and bribe Third World countries with financial rewards to take back deportees, the choices facing rejected asylum seekers inside Europe are stark: leave voluntarily to avoid deportation and return to the desperate situation they left, try to fight a legal battle to remain in Europe and risk ending up isolated in a prison cell pending deportation, or shrink into a grim underground world of exploitation and oppression, where fear of arrest is paramount, as police carry out fishing raids for illegals to fill up specially chartered flights (central Africans seem to be the favourite target of such a policy). It was precisely this fear of arrest which led **Jude A**, the 16-year-old asylum-seeker from Sierra Leone, to try to flee what he wrongly believed was a police raid in Hamburg, Germany. We categorise it as a death due to institutional neglect because,

DEATH BY POLICY

Up to 24 December, there were a total of 78 documented deaths in 1996 caused by the laws put into place to keep poor people out of Europe: the visa controls and carrier sanctions which force refugees and immigrants into clandestine and dangerous forms of travel.

Of this number, four were killed crossing minefields trying to reach the Greek border from the Turkish side. One was a stowaway, found suffocated in the hold of the ship carrying him. Two fell to their death fleeing immigration officers at the Czech border with Germany. One died from a heart attack running from border police at Ceuta, the Spanish enclave in Morocco. Three drowned trying to swim across the river Oder from Poland to Germany. The others, over 70, drowned at sea, either in heavy seas which overwhelmed the small boats they travelled in, or after being forced to jump overboard by captains who did not want to pay the fines for carrying them illegally.

On 25 December, the number of known deaths by drowning increased by 280. As western Europe tucked into its Christmas dinners, 280 Indians, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, who had paid thousands of dollars each for the illegal passage to western Europe, were forced at gunpoint off a Honduras-registered ex-Ghanaian ship into a rotting wooden launch off Greece which could carry a maximum of 100. Then, according to survivors, the captain of the ship rammed the launch, which sank in minutes amid the screams of the drowning men. Another 182 men who remained on board the ship were casually dumped on the island of Ermioni.

Police did not believe survivors at first, but after the testimony of deliberate ramming was repeated by more and more of the survivors, they were forced to act, and issued warrants for mass murder against three men allegedly responsible.

The deaths, like all the nameless deaths of immigrants, went largely unremarked in the world's media, a fact which the famed sea-survivor Tony Bullimore was quick to condemn, pointing up the contrast between the saturation coverage of his four-day ordeal and the indifferent silence over the loss of 280 lives.

Smuggling immigrants to Europe has become a lucrative business which has attracted organised criminals. The boats involved in the Christmas operation were already known to Interpol, and some of the crew are known or suspected drug smugglers.

The response of governments to human smuggling is one of complete indifference to the human tragedy of the deaths and to their cause. Increased police cooperation against the smugglers will not get rid of the problem. So long as globalisation of markets continues to destroy the livelihoods of Third World producers, and western arms sales prop up repression, people will try to escape; and so long as their legal means of escape are blocked, whether by protectionist labour policies or by slamming the doors on refugees, people are forced to use illegal and dangerous means. ■

although the alarm was raised immediately and the water police came quickly, they made no attempt to rescue him.

Where once western profiteers set up companies in Africa to reap the profits of colonial plunder, today private companies, like France's James Budd, are opening offices in the Ivory Coast to redirect deportees from Europe across the African continent. Deportees equals profit. This is the 'heart of darkness' at the centre of European asylum policy.

In Spain, over the summer, a national scandal erupted after the violent group deportations of hundreds of Africans, some sedated, others gagged and bound with packing tape.

In September, an unnamed Nigerian deportee to Guinea-Bissau died after soldiers opened fire on a demonstration by the deportees against the conditions in which they were being held. As the Spanish authorities deported the man without considering his asylum claim or his likely fate once expelled, Spanish policy is directly responsible for his death,

which we categorise here as resulting from institutional neglect. The fate of several other deportees, such as Nigerian Felix Erhahon, deported from Germany and probably arrested by the security services, or Syrian Taran, deported from Switzerland and probably arrested as soon as he landed on Syrian soil, is unknown.

The mental torture of detention

Forcing asylum-seekers into detention centres, where they must wait for months, even years, for a decision on their claim, constitutes a form of mental torture, as the Norwegian Prison Officers Union recognised after the suicides of Nigerian **Mohammed Chetef** and an unnamed asylum-seeker, whose nationality could not be verified.

The long periods of detention, and the depression and despair suffered as a result, is one major reason why asylum-seekers take their lives. The authorities cannot avoid responsibility, either, for those deaths, where official indifference pushes asylum-seekers into another underworld, this time the abyss of mental despair.

After an Iranian asylum-seeker committed suicide by jumping into a canal in Middelburg, Netherlands, 60 refugees staged a protest, saying they held the governor of the asylum reception centre responsible. He had known that the man was suffering from depression following the rejection of his asylum claim, but had nevertheless evicted the Iranian from the centre for unruly behaviour. The man was left wandering the streets and two days later he took off his clothes and jumped into the canal.

Another aspect of official indifference is the appalling safety standards in reception centres. In Germany, asylum-seekers from the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine died in fires at refugee centres.

Institutionalised inhumanity

Rejection of asylum claims is another major reason that asylum seekers take their lives. And as rejection and expulsion increase, so will the hunger strikes that constitute the last means of protest until, like the St Bernard 'sans papiers' in Paris or the Rochester hunger-strikers, they succeed, through numbers and publicity, in seizing the nation's attention.

The governor of the Dutch Willem II prison, where hunger strikes are frequent, has succeeded in blocking publicity. His response to the plight of the 27-year-old Iranian hunger-striker, Amir Mazloom Bohram, was to keep him under video surveillance in an isolated cell, interfere with his correspondence and prohibit journalists from meeting him. When journalists attempted to break through this cordon sanitaire of censorship, the governor decided to release Bohram – reported to be close to death from dehydration or liver failure – onto the streets and into illegality. No one knows what has become of him.

Some 1,500 people attended a memorial in Paris to remember the refugee **Amara Fofana**, who died of lung cancer while participating in the St Bernard's hunger-strike. It will, of course, be argued that it was cancer, not French policy, that took her life. But there can be no clearer indication of institutionalised inhumanity in European

EIGHTY-ONE DEA

AUSTRIA

23 January: Rejected Tamil asylum-seeker, 24, commits suicide by hanging himself in Linz (S/IN)

BELGIUM

6 January: Romanian youth shot and killed by police in Charleroi (P)
14 January: Peter Q, Ghanaian, dies having spent three months in a coma following police interrogations (P)
23 March: A Barkane, North African youth, shot dead by cafe owner in Marcq-les-Enghien (R)
29 April: Bajro Beganovic, 20-year-old Roma from Bosnia, shot dead by police following car chase (P)

BRITAIN

March: Ibrahima Sey, Ghanaian-born asylum-seeker, dies in police custody after being sprayed with CS gas (P)
April: Donovan Williams dies in police custody in Peckham, south London (P)
August: Ahmed El Gammal, 33-year-old Egyptian student, dies in Leyton police station (P)
September: Mohammed Yaqoob, 49, Pakistani heart patient, dies after British officials refuse trip to Britain for bypass operation (IN)
7 October: George Davis, 36-year-old Nigerian dies in Marylebone police station (P)
12 October: Vijay Singh, 13-year-old Sikh boy from Manchester, commits suicide after being racially bullied at school (R)
11 November: Oscar Okoye dies having spent five months in coma following arrest in south London (P/IN)

FRANCE

January: A Yhan, 25-year-old Kurdish asylum-seeker, hangs himself after appeal commission rules no clear evidence of ill-treatment in Turkey (S/IN)
10 January: Etienne Leborgne, 22-year-old Guadeloupian, shot dead at Saint-Ouen (P)
4 May: Mohammed Khouas, French youth of North African origin, gunned down by assailants who wanted to shoot at 'any Arab' (R)
16 October: Amara Fofana, St Bernard's hunger striker, dies of lung cancer (IN)
December: Mustafa Diffalah, 32-year-old Algerian 'sans-papiers', commits suicide by jumping out of a window after authorities refuse to give him permit (S/IN)

GERMANY

January: Refugee from the former Yugoslavia dies in refugee hostel fire at Haffkrug, near Kiel, north Germany (IN)
18 January: Ten people – Françoise Makodila Landu 27, Christelle Makodila Nsimba 6, Jean-Daniel Makodila Kosi 1, Makodila Mbonga 4, Miya Makodila 12, Christine Makodila 6, Rabia El Omri 7, Silvio Bruno C Amossou 27, Monica Maiamba Bungo 27, Nsuzana Bungo 6 – die in refugee hostel fire in Lübeck (FR)
23 January: Thavalojan Kandasamy, Sri Lankan, commits suicide in Linz detention centre (S/IN)
25 January: Kurd, 45, hangs himself in Delmenhorst, Lower Saxony (S/IN)
3 February: Patricia Wright, 23, murdered by neo-nazi serial killer in Bergisch Gladbach (FR)

ATHS IN EUROPE 1996

22 February: Jean-Baptiste Malanhat, asylum-seeker from Ivory Coast commits suicide in Murrhardt detention centre on the day he was to be deported (S/IN)
25 April: Apedo Lossou-Gava, Togolese asylum-seeker, 28, hangs himself in Landshut following rejection of his asylum claim (S/IN)
26 May: Two Algerians, both under 20, die in fire at JVA Welheiden prison (IN)
6 June: Jude A, asylum-seeker from Sierra Leone, drowns in Hamburg (IN)
25 June: Victor Onag Hnor, Nigerian asylum-seeker, commits suicude in Berlin (S/IN)
July: Nigerian hangs himself in JVA Welheiden prison, Kassel (S/IN)
15 July: Juri Palienko, Ukrainian asylum-seeker, commits suicide in Erding detention centre (S/IN)
15–16 July: Kurd hangs himself in JVA Welheiden, Kassel (S/IN)
21–22 September: Ukrainian asylum-seeker, 36, dies as a result of fire in the reception centre in Menden-Dendringsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen (IN)
23 October: Achmed Bachir, asylum-seeker, stabbed to death by racists in Leipzig (R)
4 November: Senad Becirovic, Bosnian Muslim refugee, commits suicide in a Berlin reception centre after being informed that he would be expelled if he did not leave the country voluntarily (S/IN)
24 November: Togolese asylum-seeker, 35, hangs himself in detention centre in Lörrach, near Frankfurt, after asylum claim rejected (S/IN)

IRELAND

23 June: Simon Tang, 26-year-old Chinese restauranteur, beaten to death with baseball bat by masked gang (R)
November: Albert Leung, Chinese, dies of liver failure five months after masked men broke into his house in Antrim and beat him with a wooden club (R)

ITALY

February–March: Six people, five Italians and one German, gunned down in Merano, a valley in the Dolomites of northern Italy, by a serial killer influenced by neo-nazi separatist movement and attempting ethnic cleansing (FR)
March: Mohamed Bay, 24-year-old Moroccan worker, shot by gang which may be linked to Camorra-mafia (R)
April: Ismaila Diallò, Ghanaian immigrant, murdered by his employer (R)
May: Rachid, 19-year-old Moroccan youth, drowns in Murazzi's river Po after being involved in fight (R)
May: Zoran Ahmetovic, 32-year-old Roma, dies in disputed circumstances at Velletri prison, near Rome (IN)
July: Iqbal Hossain, 40-year-old rose-seller from Bangladesh, attacked by gang and thrown into the river in Frascati (FR)
October: Mohamed Korrich, 25, Algerian, dies after jumping out of train to avoid deportation to Slovenia (S/IN)
15 December: Baba Ossen Seidu, Malian, dies in questionable circumstances following police stop (P)

NETHERLANDS

No date: Moroccan youth, Kalai, shot and killed by bouncer at Rotterdam disco (FR)
January: Russian asylum-seeker, Michael, aged 25, dies after throwing himself in front of a train (S/IN)
17 January: Igor Horvat, 29-year-old Bosnian refugee, commits suicide by hanging in Den Bosch prison (S/IN)
February: Homayoun, Afghani refugee, commits suicide by drowning (S/IN)
February: Ethiopian asylum-seeker takes drug overdose (S/IN)
April: Zahra Muhmmad, Somalian woman, commits suicide (S/IN)
April: Mekonnen, Ethiopian, aged nearly 30, drowns after throwing himself into a canal in the Hague (S/IN)
25 April: Ali Ostawar, 31-year-old Iranian, commits suicide (S/IN)
May: Mahawada, 35-year-old Sri Lankan cuts his throat in the lavatory of the Dronten reception centre (S/IN)
10 June: 33-year-old Nigerian asylum-seeker hangs himself at detention centre in Ter Apel (S/IN)
1 July 1996: Amir Salehi, Iranian, dies two months after setting himself on fire as protest to long asylum procedure (S/IN)
August 1996: Mohmad, Iranian, sets himself on fire in Leeuwarden (S/IN)
September: Bosnian asylum-seeker dies of a drugs overdose in Zwolle (S/IN)
27 September: Amir Naderi, Iranian refugee, takes drug overdose (S/IN)
6 December: Iranian asylum-seeker, 30, commits suicide by jumping into canal in Middelburg after asylum application refused (S/IN)
7 December: Amir Kavey, 30-year-old Iranian refugee, commits suicide after spending 17 months at a reception centre (S/IN)

NORWAY

January: 19-year-old asylum-seeker commits suicide in Bergen county jail after spending ten months in prison awaiting asylum decision (S/IN)
22 January: Mohammed Chetef, 26-year-old Nigerian asylum-seeker, commits suicide after being held for nine months because police doubted his identity (S/IN)

SPAIN

May: David Alfonso, 17, fatally stabbed by 'National Bakaladros' in Arganzuela (FR)
June: Mohamed M.H, Muslim, 45, dies in police custody in Melilla after going to complain about being badly treated on a bus (P)
23 September: Nigerian, expelled from Spain, dies of gunshot wounds after protesting at conditions of detention in Guinea-Bissau (IN)

SWEDEN

6 November: Mohammed Sharkeri, 27-year-old Iranian asylum-seeker facing deportation, commits suicide (S/IN)

TOTALS

S/IN	**Suicides/institutional neglect**	**32**
IN	**Institutional neglect**	**9**
P	**Police**	**11**
R	**Racism**	**9**
FR	**Far Right**	**20**

asylum policy than that no mercy is shown to someone whom fatal illness has already condemned to death.

Heart patient **Mohammed Yaqoob** died in Pakistan. But we record his death in the British section because it was British officials who blocked his trip to Britain for a bypass operation, in case he overstayed his visa. The British authorities 'bear a major responsibility for this man's avoidable death', in the words of the Scottish Labour MP George Galloway, who pointed out that the family had raised funds for his treatment at a Glasgow private hospital.

Prison degradation

Conditions in which asylum-seekers are kept in prisons in Kassel, Germany, have been a cause of concern since prison riots in 1994. But in 1996 things came to a head again, when four prisoners died in the space of one week. A Kurd and a Nigerian hanged themselves, while two Algerians died in a fire, the cause of which is disputed. The prison officers say that the Algerians started the fatal fire at the JVA Welheiden prison, which is notorious for overcrowding, brutality and racism.

But the Elwe Trial Monitoring Group has documented an alarming catalogue of institutional neglect at the prison, and prisoners in the hospital section at the time of the fire, who are suing the prison, claim that the Algerians had been under heavy sedation for two days and were not let out of their cells in spite of calls for help.

POLICE

This year, 11 deaths resulting from policing are recorded in Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Britain. Most of the dead were African immigrants or black Europeans of African descent. Although the killings happened in different circumstances they are linked by a disregard on the part of the police for basic civil rights.

Emergency measures

Although France does not record the highest tally of police deaths (the UK has that honour), erosion of civil liberties in France has intensified since anti-terrorist measures were first brought in in the summer of 1995. Under the 'Vigipirate', as it is known, the army patrols police stations and airports while the Foreign Legion patrols metro and regional express

trains. Border controls and road checks have been implemented and suburban housing estates with large concentrations of north Africans are placed under special surveillance.

Etienne Leborgne, a 22-year-old black man from Guadeloupe, first came into confrontation with the police after driving through a road check at Roissy airport. The police must have traced his car vehicle number for, several days later, they came to his home. Apparently, Leborgne was driving up to the house as the police were leaving. A car chase followed. When Leborgne's car was surrounded by police officers who smashed a window, one would have thought it would be the Guadeloupian trapped inside who was frightened. But according to the police officer who shot Leborgne through the head, he was the one who felt threatened.

Suspect communities

Special anti-terrorist measures, like the Vigipirate, give rise to a suspension of civil liberties – that is, after all, the nature of emergency powers. But in the UK, where Ghanaian asylum-seeker **Ibrahima Sey** became the first victim of new police weaponry in the form of CS gas, and in Belgium, where two eastern Europeans, one a Roma, were shot dead following car chases, no such emergency powers existed. Claims by lawyers in Brussels that the police are carrying out a 'holy war' in which all means are justified by the end, were (inadvertently) confirmed by the police commissioner for the immigrant suburb of Schaerbeek. Just as US troops helped liberate Belgium from its German occupiers in 1944, he said, so too were his men wresting control of the commune back from a new set of invaders.

When immigrants are equated with invaders, inevitably suspicion falls upon them when they seek police assistance. Loubna Ben Äissa, a 9-year-old Moroccan girl, went missing in Belgium in 1992. Last year, a special parliamentary commission investigating paedophile gangs heard testimony from the girl's family about police indifference to Loubna's fate. The defence of the Brussels prosecutor-general only served to inflame anger; he said that 'the police and the justice system were unfamiliar with the Moroccan community. At the time we lacked the element to separate truth from lies'.

Suspicion, too, fell on **Mohammed M H** when he went to a police station in the Spanish enclave of Melilla in Morocco, to report an incident on the bus. According to the police, he was drunk and died 'suddenly' in the station. A second

Autonoom Centrum

PROFITS ABOVE PEOPLE

CARF has previously explored the commercial and diplomatic interests which bind European governments and the governments of the refugee-producing countries (see *CARF* 30). The Masari case, in which the British government caused a furore in January 1996 by ordering Saudi refugee Mohammed al-Masari out of Britain to safeguard arms contracts worth £20 billion with the Saudi regime, was a particularly barefaced example. Two more recent examples, involving the Netherlands and Germany, show how the cosy commercial and diplomatic relationship, in which an authoritarian government is supported to safeguard investment, works at the expense of refugees and political activists.

In the Netherlands, José Maria Sison, a co-founder of the Philippines Communist party in the 1960s, has been ordered to leave the country despite being declared a refugee by the country's highest administrative court. According to that court's ruling, Sison, who was imprisoned for nine years and tortured by the Marcos regime, is not a terrorist and has committed no crimes which would justify withholding of refugee status. But the Justice Ministry has chosen to ignore the ruling, and although it does not propose to remove Sison to the Philippines, it will deport him to a third country if it can find one which will have him. The ministry justifies its decision by reviving the discredited claims of terrorism.

Campaigners believe that the motivation for the decision, which comes after Sison and his family have been in the Netherlands for six years, is political and economic. The grant of refugee status would 'displease and offend' the USA as well as the Philippines government; and Dutch-based multinationals such as Shell, Unilever, ING-Baring and Philips have a large stake in the Philippines economy.

In Germany, according to the newspaper *Rhein-Main*, Kenyan opposition leader Sheikh Khalid Salim Ahmed Balala is being set up by the German authorities in collusion with Kenyan dictator Daniel Arap Moi, to prevent him from returning to Kenya to contest the elections promised for 1997. In order to keep up appearances of 'progress to democracy', Moi has promised the west that he will hold elections.

But Balala, head of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK), which represents the coastal Muslims and has a large following, was stripped of his citizenship in 1994 while on a visit to Germany, and since then has been prevented from returning. He claims that German officials physically prevented him from boarding a plane to Nairobi, and that since Moi's meeting with German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel in December 1995, he has been under intensive surveillance by the German police, and all his attempts to get travel facilities from other embassies have been refused.

The British security service MI6 has been accused of involvement in this campaign to keep him away from Kenya. In October 1996, Balala claims that German police working with the Kenyan Special Branch tried to set him up to buy a false passport, in order to have a pretext to put him in prison. A senior police officer is alleged to have told him that he would stay in Europe until after the Kenyan elections, on the orders of the foreign ministry. Much of Kenya's leisure industry is German-owned, and 90 per cent of the tourists to Kenya's game parks are German. ■

International Campaign for Asylum of the Sison Family, c/o PO Box 2041, NL-3800 Amersfort, Tel/Fax: +31/33 4723084.

autopsy commissioned by the Muslim's family found that the dead man had received several blows to his head hours before his death.

RACISM

In Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and Italy, black people were killed because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time and racists saw their very presence as a threat. Like **Mohammed Khouas**, a 19-year-old French youth of North African origin shot at by two men, both drug-users, who wanted to shoot at 'any Arab'; or **A Barkane**, again of North African origin, shot dead by the owner of a Belgium cafe who claimed, in his defence, that he had a fear of foreigners. A further death recorded here is that of the 13-year-old schoolboy, **Vijay Singh**, who took his own life after suffering a week of racial bullying at his Manchester school.

Italy – a combination of racisms

Popular racism seems most prevalent in Italy which saw four deaths at the hands of racists. Movements have occurred sporadically throughout Italy in the course of 1996 to keep immigrants and Roma out of city-centres, sometimes fomented by the Northern League and the National Alliance, sometimes the result of grassroots mobilisations and sometimes directed by the Mafia, particularly in the South where the Camorra launched a vicious campaign to evict immigrants by threatening landlords with violence. Ten immigrants, picked at random, were shot, mostly through the legs, during a Mafia campaign in the Caserta area during April. And **Mohamed Bay**, a 24-year-old Moroccan worker, died after being shot in the chest when an armed gang forced him off the road.

A strong factor in this combination of racisms was the passing of the Dini decree by the then centre-right government at the end of 1995. Within weeks of the decree, which introduced tough sanctions for employers of illegal labour while offering an amnesty to workers whose employers would agree to pay social insurance contributions, immigrant workers were being sacked. The killing of Ghanaian immigrant **Ismaila Diallò** can be directly attributed to the decree. His employer had demanded money from the Ghanaian to make it worth his while to legalise him. But the boss never made the official declaration and when the Ghanaian asked for his money back, his employer killed him.

Another sectarianism

For the first time since we started our audit four years ago, we include two deaths in Ireland. Although the primary motive for the murder of Chinese restaurateur **Simon Tang,** and the attack on **Albert Leung** which led to his death, was burglary, racism lies behind the targeting of the Chinese, who believe that attacks on them have increased since the ceasefire as sectarian gangs vent their aggression on them.

FAR RIGHT

Twenty people died at the hands of the far Right in Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands.

Nationalism and the denial of racism

Ten asylum-seekers, of whom eight were Zaireans and six children, died in the Lübeck fire on 18 January. Although a Lebanese man, Safwan Eid, is currently on trial in Germany accused of the fire, we unhesitatingly ascribe these deaths to the far Right, given the evidence of a neo-nazi connection documented by the independent commission set up to investigate the circumstances surrounding Eid's arrest.

This was the worst disaster to hit a refugee hostel, and the worst racist attack against foreigners in Germany since the second world war. Yet, from the moment the toll of this terrible blaze was revealed, the German authorities have set out to establish the nation's innocence at the expense of the hostel residents, finding a ready scapegoat in Eid.

By the time he is released, as we are confident he will be, it may be too late to investigate the evidence against the three neo-nazis originally arrested. Despite the fact that all were at the scene of the fire, all had been observed buying petrol at a local petrol station and, at the time of arrest, all had freshly singed eyelashes and eyebrows, they were immediately released.

Serial killers – a frightening development

In Germany and Italy, at least seven people died at the hands of neo-nazi psychopaths. As well as stabbing **Patricia White** 91 times in the back because she was wearing a 'Nazis Out' patch, the German neo-nazi Thomas Lenke, a former mercenary in Croatia, killed his ex-girlfriend and at least two of his own neo-nazi comrades (he also killed a black man in 1995).

Italian serial killer Ferdinand Gamper gunned down six people in a valley in the Dolomites of northern Italy before committing suicide. He was a sympathiser of the neo-nazi separatist movement that wants the Alto Adige to secede from Italy, and join up with Austria, its northern neighbour. Gamper was an ethnic German, while all but one of his victims (who was probably killed through mistaken identity) were Italians whom he killed in a demented attempt at ethnic cleansing. ■

Additional information from Institute of Race Relations, European Race Audit, Migration Newssheet, United and Searchlight
Special thanks to the Antirassistische Initiative for information on Germany, and Participating Refugees in Europe for data on the Netherlands

THE BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE IRR EUROPEAN RACE AUDIT
contains essential material on the growth of racism and fascism collated from at least 50 European newspapers and magazines

Price £10 for individuals & community groups from IRR, 2–6 Leeke Street, London WC1X 9HS

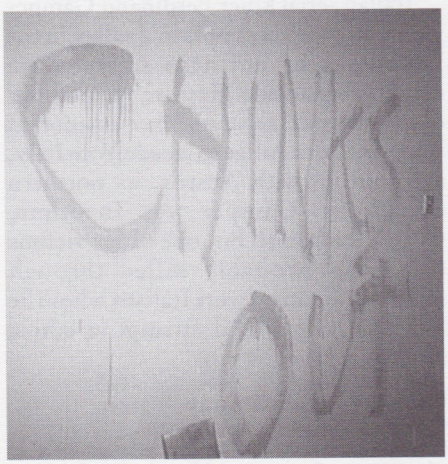
Why has it taken so long for officialdom to recognise the black presence in northern Ireland?

Here to stay, here to fight

The Royal Ulster Constabulary, northern Ireland's police force, is notorious for denying the racial motive for racist attacks. Black communities in Britain experience similar police indifference. But northern Ireland's black communities see little official acknowledgement generally of their presence in the province. Unlike Britain, northern Ireland has no Race Relations Act. Although the Act in Britain is lamentably weak and ineffective, the lack of one in northern Ireland can only make matters even worse.

Denying 'race' and racism

The government's indifference to the black communities of northern Ireland is extreme. It doesn't even know how many black people are living in the province. That's because, whereas in England, Scotland and Wales the 1991 census included a question on 'ethnic origin', in northern Ireland this question was replaced by one on religious affiliation. Everything is subsumed within the dichotomy of catholic–protestant, nationalist–unionist.



The denial of 'race' and racism at official level only leads to greater isolation. One Pakistani schoolgirl who suffered years of racial abuse and harassment and found her complaints ignored by her teachers was unable to bring a case against the school or local education authority precisely because there was no legislation to combat racial discrimination.

In northern Ireland, it is not against the law for an employer to refuse someone a job because they are, say, Chinese or Indian. As recently as 1988 the British government felt able to tell the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that there was no racial discrimination in the province since immigration to northern Ireland was minimal. It is perhaps no accident that it was to this haven of 'zero immigration' that Enoch Powell turned when he found the Tories too left–wing!

Who are the migrant communities?

In the last 30 years the migrant population has expanded greatly and now accounts for between 10,000 and 15,000, almost 1%. White attitudes to black people in northern Ireland are not so different from those of white Britons to black people in the 1950s and early '60s. They are seen by many as strange and exotic. But the racism that scars the landscape of Britain is just as present in northern Ireland, it's just that few acknowledge it is there. The principal communities are Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Traveller, of which the largest community is the Chinese.

Chinese fight on many fronts

The Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) reckons on a population of about 8,000; a recent government-supported study conveniently finds a much lower figure of around 3,000. This figure is rejected by the community as unsystematic and reflecting only widespread mistrust of officialdom.

Most Chinese settlers are from Hong Kong and came to northern Ireland only after living first in cities in England or Scotland. Almost all work in the catering trade – takeaways and restaurants. The first takeaway shop opened in 1962. There was a hiatus after the Troubles began in 1969 but from the mid-1970s onwards the community has grown rapidly.

The Chinese community is organised primarily through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and its social subsidiary the Chinese Welfare Association (CWA). According to the CWA the main concerns of the community are: racist violence and access to justice; equal access to public

services in areas of housing, health, social services and education. There is little translated material and social services has only one Chinese translator for the whole of northern Ireland. Health and education authorities are providing some translated information but due to the lack of race legislation it is not required as yet by law.

In 1996, over 40 incidents of racial violence, including one murder, were reported through the CWA's monitoring scheme. Many takeaway owners in Belfast experience such a high level of racial violence and harassment that they have installed security grilles over their counters. Those who can afford it employ white people to serve in front of house. One takeaway owner in Ballymena was actually forced to leave northern Ireland and return to England after sustaining racist harassment daily for nearly two years.

On one public housing estate in a loyalist area of Belfast in 1995 there was a spate of attacks on Chinese residents and their property. One fifth of the 40 families were forced to move out. The Chinese Welfare Association asked the loyalist residents' group what was going on and was told the residents were only acting to ensure the estate didn't get 'taken over by Chinkies'. When the CWA said they would not apply for any more places for Chinese on that estate the attacks stopped. Patrick Yu, chair of the CWA, says 'in particular, the attacks are coming from the strongly loyalist areas'.

Pakistani women organise

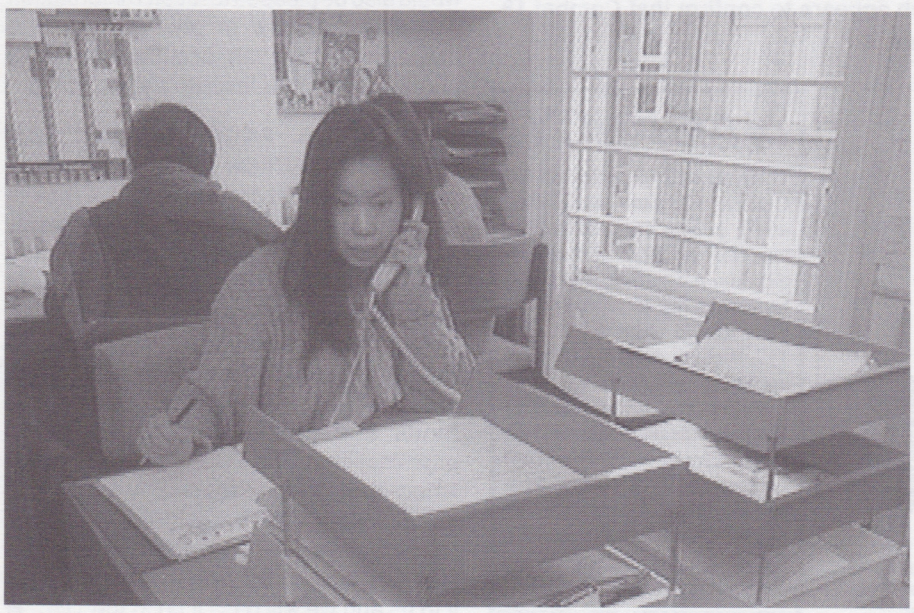
The Pakistani community numbers around 700 and is concentrated in Craigavon, a new town west of Belfast. Although the primary employment is small family businesses (market trading etc), the community is not organised through a trade association. Instead, it is the women who organise through the Asian Women's Centre of Craigavon.

The centre, which is based on a rundown estate on the outskirts of Craigavon is regularly vandalised and those families who still live on the estate suffer daily racist harassment and abuse from a small minority of white residents. Rukhsar Ali, co-ordinator of the centre, came to live in northern Ireland after finding too much racism in the north of England and says that, but for the troublesome minority on her estate, life in Craigavon would be paradise on earth. But what trouble they do have, she says, is compounded by the refusal of the RUC to take their grievances seriously. Once, teenagers set fire to her house while she was bathing her children. So far the police have made no arrests, although there have been nearly a dozen attacks.

As with CWA, the Asian Women's Centre says that access to public services is fundamentally unjust. There are no translated materials and no translators.

Indians demand race laws

The Indian community, reckoned around 1,000, came to northern Ireland much earlier, in the 1940s and '50s. It is by and large a prosperous community. As you might expect with a longer established community, many in the younger generation are now moving away from small family businesses in market trading or catering into the public and private corporate sector. Reflecting the economic status of its members, the Indian Community Centre is largely a cultural institution, but it has been crucial in the political campaign for race legislation in the province.



Travellers – a forgotten minority

The fourth minority community in northern Ireland is the Travellers. There are around 1,300 in the province, organised through the Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People. Travellers have been recognised as a distinct cultural group throughout Ireland since the tenth century. Until the second world war the Traveller community was part of the rural economy, providing services such as chimney cleaning and crop picking. Now most live in trailers on one of two legal sites, one 'tolerated' site and five illegal sites in Belfast where the conditions are appalling and insanitary.

Travellers experience all the racism and discrimination that black migrant groups do and more. Even the RUC, slow to admit any racism within the force, admits that there is often prejudice against Travellers.

United for recognition

In 1994 the four community groups – CWA, ICA, Asian Women's Centre and Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People – joined others to form the first anti-racist umbrella group in the province, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities. NICEM has had some success in raising awareness of black communities.

The group has also had some success with the government, which over the last few years has at last begun to take the issue of racism in the province seriously. After much prevaricating the Northern Ireland Office finally sent a draft bill to Parliament on 14 January 1997. The bill should be passed by April or May, but NICEM is concerned that the general election may put the matter back to the bottom of the parliamentary priorities list whichever party wins.

One effect of the paramilitary ceasefires was to bring the issue of racism and the presence of northern Ireland's black communties to the fore. Many believe it was because sectarian violence needed a new target; a more plausible explanation is that the hiatus in the violence provided an opportunity for the years of organising by the NICEM community groups to be recognised at last. ■

Chinese Welfare Association Tel 01232 238220, Indian Community Association Tel 01232 815303/ 249746, Asian Women's Centre Craigavon Tel 01762 341109, Belfast Travellers Sites Project Tel 01232 330144.

CAMPAIGNS AND REPORTS

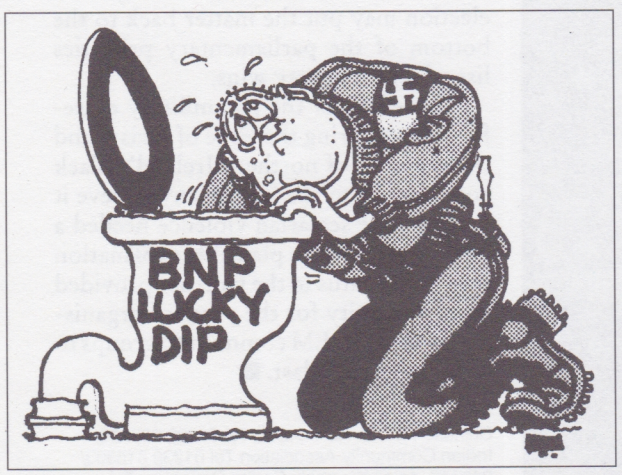
C18 feud linked to letterbomb plot

The latest violent splits in the nazi Combat 18 came explosively into view in January, when Danish police held seven Scandinavian fascists in connection with a letter bomb campaign aimed at the UK. Some of the letter bombs, sent from Malmo in Sweden and Copenhagen, were intended for black sportsmen and women and their families, others targeted anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations. Less publicised targets included fascist rivals.

Exactly which faction of the 'racial brothers' was responsible is still unclear, but the feud is a direct result of a falling out between Charlie Sargent and Will Browning over control of nazi music network Blood & Honour. The expanding nazi music business is a major source of income to the financially inept C18 (or, more accurately, its corrupt organisers).

The Combat 18 PO Box and former BNP and Blood & Honour Scottish organiser Steven Cartwright were both targets. Cartwright, a former BNP election candidate who appeared on a Channel 4 documentary in 1993 to deny the Holocaust, became Scottish organiser for C18-controlled Blood & Honour in 1995, a move which led to disputes with the BNP hierarchy. He split from the London C18 leadership last year in a dispute with Sargent and Browning over control of the Scottish edition of the Blood & Honour magazine – a split confirmed by his attendance in November at an anniversary gig for Oswald Moseley, and by his renaming of the magazine *The Highlander*. It is this split which precipitated his targeting – although Cartwright is believed to have formed links with Scandinavian nazis himself.

Five of the seven detained in Denmark have been charged, but only one has been named. Thomas Nakaba, believed to be the leader of the gang which sent the bombs, has links with C18. The Special Branch apparently warned targets several days before the bombs were intercepted, which appears to confirm that Combat 18 is at the very least deeply infiltrated by the state. ■



The BNP seems to have run out of suitable members to put up as candidates as the general election approaches. The appeal, shown right, appeared in the January edition of *British Nationalist*.

VACANCY

There are still vacancies left for General Election candidacies where people are desperate to vote for the BNP at the next election. All patriots wishing to be considered to represent the party should write to PO. Box 117, Welling, Kent DA16 3DW enclosing a political c.v.

There are no residential qualifications and seats could well be (and almost certainly will be) half way across the country from any candidate's home town. All that is required is that candidates are party members and on the electoral register.

Fighting the fascists in the General Election

Is a fascist candidate standing in your constituency?

■ Monitor your **LOCAL PRESS**. Fascist candidates often attempt to gain publicity in the run-up to an election. The candidates' personal history, or their party's previous performances, often give the lie to their election promises. Make sure you write to the paper and expose their lies.

■ **WHO ARE YOUR BNP/ND CANDIDATES?** Where do they come from and what do you know about them? Have they campaigned in your area before and do they have a record of violence or criminal convictions? Also, it is not unknown for fascist candidates to falsify names on nomination papers, or get nominations by deception, which can disqualify them from standing.

■ Are the fascists planning **ELECTION MEETINGS** in your area? It is always worth checking venues where they have stood in the past and whether any damage was caused. The meeting has to be open to the public and not a rally for their own members; has the meeting been debated by your local council? Have counter-demonstrations or pickets been organised?

■ Have you approached your **LOCAL AUTHORITY, TRADE UNION, TENANTS' OR RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION** or **COMMUNITY GROUPS** for support in opposing the fascists?

■ If you think that the fascists are standing in your area **CARF WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU**. We will be able to supply background information on candidates. We would also be pleased to receive information – cuttings, articles or photographs – to assist in building an accurate profile of areas in which the fascists are standing.

■ **MONITOR FASCIST ELECTION LITERATURE**. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 the Post Office is required to deliver mail for all the parties during the pre-election period. Many trade unionists have objected to delivering fascist propaganda and a resolution by the Communication Workers Union at the TUC Black Workers' Conference in 1996 called on the TUC to 'prevent the use of public funds and public services by these organisations'. The TUC will be monitoring when and where fascist literature is disseminated. CARF would like any of our readers who receive fascist election literature through the post to send a copy of it to us and we will pass it on to the TUC. ■

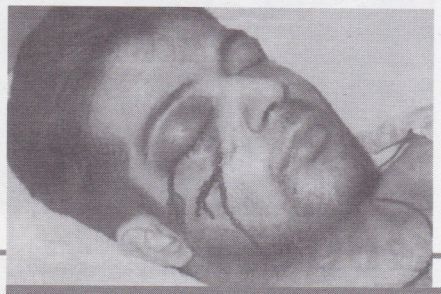
Justice for Amer Rafiq

'One year after a brutal assault on a member of our community and what has changed?' asked Mukhtar Dar of the Amer Rafiq defence campaign. 'The CPS have refused to press charges, the PCA's recommendations amount to nothing and Amer is still suffering.' It is a year since Amer, a 21-year-old waiter and part-time student, had such a violent encounter with Manchester police on his way to Eid celebrations that the socket of his right eye was shattered and could not be saved.

Although the PCA report showed that Amer's eye 'came into contact' with a wham ram used to batter down doors, the PCA concluded that there was no intentional assault on Amer. It recommended that three police officers face disciplinary charges, not for assault or grievous bodily harm, but for neglect of duty in relation to prisoner care. Two other officers will receive 'advice' for kicking Amer's car and for failing to tell Amer's family that he had been taken to hospital.

Although the fact that at least some form of action has been taken is welcome, for Amer, his family and his supporters it does not go nearly far enough. They are demanding that officers be prosecuted in the criminal courts, and meanwhile are pursuing a civil action against the police to compensate Amer for his injuries.

Manchester's Asian community has not forgotten this incident – public meetings in Amer's support have been packed and demonstrations of local Asian youth have been loud and angry. On 22 February, a year after the event, there will be a day of action against police brutality – shops on Manchester's Wilmslow Road will display black flags and there will be a demonstration outside Platt Lane police station. ■



DEMONSTRATE

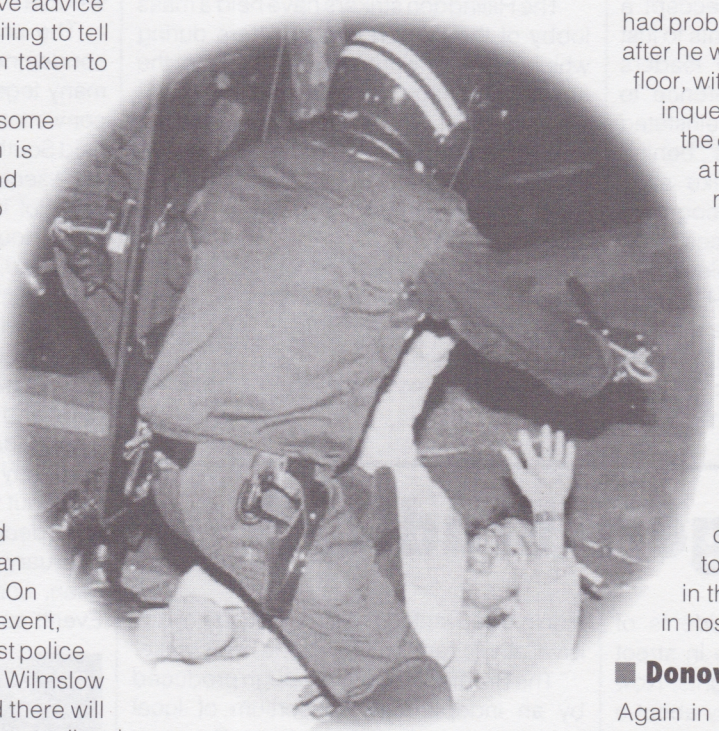
Assemble 12 noon, Saturday 22 February

Outside the Jewel in the Crown restaurant on Manchester's Willmslow Road. March to Platt Lane police station.

For more info contact Amer Rafiq defence campaign on 0976 241750 or 0976 267247.

POSTURAL ASPHYXIA... ACCIDENTAL DEATH... HYPERTENSIVE HEART DISEASE...

Brutality by another name?



■ Wayne Douglas

In December 1996 a verdict of accidental death was recorded at the inquest into the death of Wayne Douglas. The jury ruled that Wayne had died from 'heart failure' caused by 'positional asphyxia' brought on by stress and exhaustion. (It rejected the police pathologist's view that he had died from hypertensive heart disease.) Witnesses claimed that they saw officers 'raining blows on the boy with batons' during the arrest. The family, who were disappointed with the verdict, are to seek a judicial review. ■

■ Kenneth Severin

An inquest in January into another black death in custody again heard of the dangers of control and restraint procedures. Kenneth Severin, a 25-year-old schizophrenic, died in November 1995 after being forcibly removed from his cell in the medical wing of Belmarsh prison to be taken to a strip cell. Officers testified that normal control and restraint procedures were insufficient. Eight officers were eventually involved in his removal. An inmate in the neighbouring cell testified that he heard officers beating him. The post mortem suggested that Kenneth had probably died from 'postural asphyxia' after he was held naked, face down on the floor, with his hands behind his back. The inquest recorded an open verdict, but the coroner made strong recommendations about the treatment of mentally ill patients and the need for research into 'postural asphyxia'. ■

■ Herbert Gabbidon

Herbert Gabbidon, a 68-year-old Jamaican who was due to be deported, died in mysterious circumstances in the custody of Walsall police. On 10 January, Herbert went voluntarily with the officers, after saying his goodbyes to his family, and was then 'taken ill' in the station car park. He died later in hospital. ■

■ Donovan Williams

Again in December, the inquest into the death of Donovan Williams (*CARF* 32), which brought in a verdict of 'accidental death', heard that Donovan died as police officers tried to retrieve wraps of crack-cocaine from his mouth. Stress and exhaustion caused by police restraint methods, combined with an existing heart complaint, led to his death. The coroner made recommendations to revise police restraint methods. ■

■ Peter Austin

On 30 January African-Caribbean Peter Austin was found hanging by his shirt in his cell at Brentford magistrates court. Securicor, which manages the cells he died in, says that guards checked him ten minutes before his death, but found nothing suspicious. ■

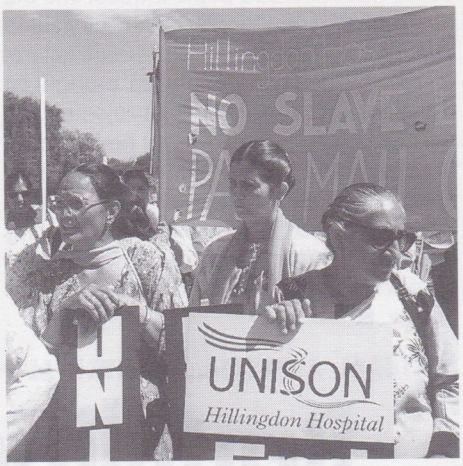
Hillingdon strikers betrayed

Grunwick, Burnsalls... now Hillingdon has become the most recent in the history of trade union betrayals of black workers' struggles.

Britain's biggest union, Unison, has withdrawn backing for the strike of 53 Asian women cleaners at Hillingdon hospital. The women were sacked for refusing to accept wage cuts from cleaning firm Pall Mall, which won the hospital's cleaning contract and attempted to re-employ staff to do the same work for less money.

Ironically, on the day that Unison withdrew its support, 16 January, the European Parliament voted to outlaw the right of private contractors to cut the wages and conditions of ex-public service workers. Instead of using the European Parliament decision to renew the battle and strengthen the strike, the union caved in.

After a 16-month strike, Unison leaders recommended that the strikers accept a payoff from Pall Mall which amounts to just £4,000 each. Although Unison leaders pledged at their national conference to support the strikers 'until they are reinstated on their old terms and conditions', behind the scenes they used the strike as a bargaining tool to gain union recognition from Pall Mall at other workplaces. Now that these aims have been achieved for Unison, the union has advised the Hillingdon strikers to accept the payoff. The strikers, however, have refused to accept this betrayal. 'We will not be sacrificed,' said Malkiat Bilku, a spokesperson for the strikers. 'Now we are left with no union support, no strike pay, no job, but will not give in. This strike has always been about rights for all workers, not just for us – what does £4,000 achieve? We will fight on.'



The Hillingdon strikers have held a mass lobby of the Unison headquarters during which barriers were erected to stop the strikers entering their own union building! Braving racist abuse and insults, they are still mounting daily pickets outside Hillingdon hospital, but without strike pay they are desperate for donations to keep them going. ■

Please send donations and messages of support to Hillingdon Strikers Support Campaign, c/o 27 Townsend Way, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1TG. Donations to Lloyds Bank, Uxbridge. Sort code 30-98-91 Account No 2853884.
Fax protests to Unison General Secretary on 0171 387 6692.

Report angers Bradford

In June 1995 young Asian residents of Manningham took on the police in street battles which lasted for three nights. Now the people of Bradford are angry about a report which blames the community.

Ever since the 1970s a public inquiry has been demanded whenever police have run amok in black communities or black individuals got hurt or killed and no one called to account. Independent inquiries like those into the deaths of Colin Roach (in Stoke Newington police station) or Ahmed Ullah (on a Burnage school playground) have produced reports reflecting the concerns of the community and drawing lessons of universal application. But government-appointed inquiries like the Scarman Inquiry into the Brixton 'disturbances' have played safe. There was no such thing as institutional racism, said Scarman, only ethnic disadvantage – and a decade of divisive 'ethnic reparations' came in his wake.

The Bradford report, although produced by an independent consortium of local voluntary organisations, is in the Scarman mould. It concludes that the cause of the disorder 'was the unacceptable behaviour of those ... people who behaved so anti-socially' and rejects the suggestion that the disorders occurred because the police are racist.

Long and reactionary, the report reads like an arid sociological tract. Little wonder. The two members of the inquiry who endorsed it were sociology don Sheila Allen and local government lawyer John Barratt. Mohammed Taj, a local trade unionist, refused to sign the report, publishing his own, 'A can do city', which does come out against police racism. ■

Challenge to 'joint enterprise'

On 17 February the House of Lords will give a ruling on the murder conviction of Philip English. It is a ruling that may affect numerous convictions based on the principle of joint enterprise.

English was convicted of murdering police sergeant Bill Forth in Gateshead in 1993, even though he never wielded a knife and was handcuffed, and in the custody of another police officer 100 yards away, at the time of the fatal stabbing. English admits that he participated with his co-defendant Paul Weddle in an attack on the sergeant, but he then fled, and was caught by police reinforcements 100 yards away, while Weddle went on to stab the officer to death.

The jury at the trial accepted the prosecution argument that although English had not participated in the stabbing, he was a party to it because of his initial involvement in the attack, and liable for Weddle's action of murder.

The use of 'joint enterprise' has been condemned by Amnesty International and many legal experts, particularly since the convictions of the Sharpeville Six in apartheid South Africa in 1986. There, six people were sentenced to death for their presence at a riot in which councillors were killed, even though the actual killers were never identified.

English's family and supporters are joining with the families of Derek Bentley (convicted of murder for calling 'Let him have it' at his friend, who then shot a policeman) and the Kings X Two, to argue that for a secondary party to be convicted of murder, they must have intended to jointly carry out the crime.

A decision in favour of English on 17 February could mean new hope for Badrul Miah, convicted of the killing of Richard Everitt as a joint enterprise. ■

The appeals of Badrul Miah (pictured) and Showkat Akbar, the Kings X Two, were turned down in December, but there could be new hope for them if the courts recognise the injustice of 'joint enterprise' convictions. The campaign to free Badrul and Showkat continues. Contact Box 132, 63 Camden High Street, London NW1 7JL, or ring 0956 145694/ 0956 646703/0973 632827.

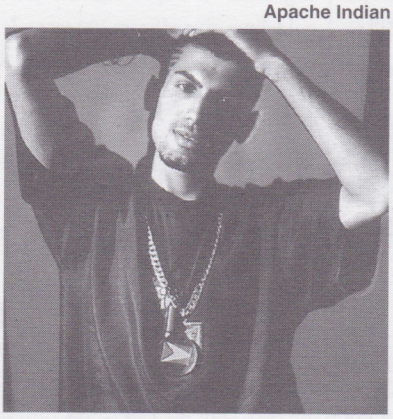
Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music

Edited by Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk and Ashwani Sharma (Zed Books, £12.95)

This important book combines chapters on Asian participation in bhangra, soul, jungle and hip hop, interviews with artists, and political analysis of the anti-racist positions of bands like Fun^Da^Mental, Asian Dub Foundation, Kaliphz and Hustlers HC. At a time when Asian youth are becoming increasingly criminalised and targeted by state institutions as well as by popular racism, a new generation of Asian bands are taking up the role of organic intellectuals. The strength of *Dis-Orienting Rhythms* is its attempt to follow the example of the bands themselves and not separate music and politics as cultural studies scholars usually do. This stance allows many of the chapters to open up a debate about the kinds of political identity expressed in Asian popular culture, especially the complex set of affinities which Asian young people have towards black culture, be it ragga (as in Apache Indian), soul, jungle or hip hop. Asian involvement in the cultural production and consumption of these genres has often been written out of media accounts. The main achievement of the book is to show how recent developments in Asian music have re-opened the question of an Afro-Asian black political identity. The interview with Bally Sagoo and Radical Sista provides a useful accompaniment to this argument by highlighting how these artists see the meaning of their own work as an attempt to make Asian music which attracts the same respect which they had for black music when they were growing up. Similarly in another chapter DJ Ritu reveals how the club Outcaste was an attempt to make Asian culture as cool as Afro-Caribbean culture.

Unfortunately too much of the material in *Dis-Orienting Rhythms* still adopts academic cultural studies conventions; for example, at least three new words or phrases are invented arrogantly and unnecessarily. In spite of these distractions, *Dis-Orienting Rhythms* is well worth reading, if you're prepared to wade through the bits addressing various irrelevant issues within cultural studies. ■

Apache Indian



Around the courts

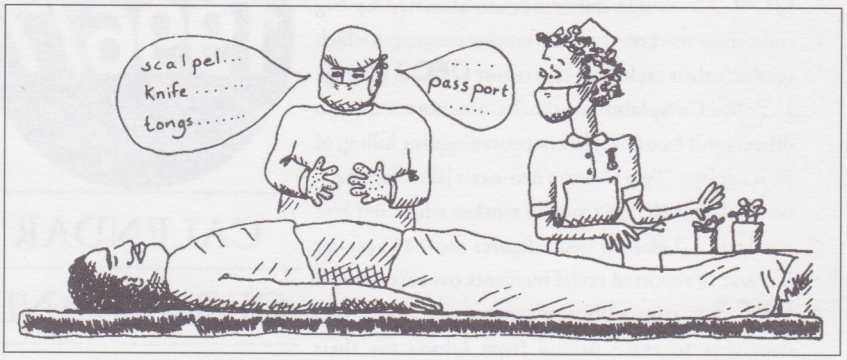
Judge advocates self-defence

A judge told Asian shopkeepers that they were entitled to keep a weapon handy to defend themselves against racist attacks. His comments came as he sentenced Terry Johnson to four years for his part in a gang attack on Asians who ran an east London off-licence. Whether east London police, who regularly arrest Asians when they try to defend themselves against racial attack, will heed the judge's advice is something only time will tell.

Racist Ray cons court

Days after the High Court ordered Tower Hamlets to help white 'victim' of Asian 'race hatred' Ray Bradford, it was revealed that Bradford had stood as a candidate for the fascist National Front in 1984. Although Bradford now says he threw away all his magazines and badges, he admitted that he might be remembered in the area for that, and for his later campaign against halal dinners at his son's primary school. Shame on those who gave credence to his story of unprovoked harassment by racist Asian 'tormentors'. ■

CRE researches internal controls



David Drew

On 27 January provisions in the Asylum and Immigration Act came into force, making it a criminal offence to employ unauthorised workers. It marks an important shift in British immigration policy, moving from a system of stopping immigration at the borders, to a sytem of internal controls. The law is clearly intended both to prevent any further migration to Britain and to make it so difficult to find work that those who are here are induced to leave. Employers are now being forced to demand all kinds of evidence from new employees who have to prove their right to work, and face a £5,000 fine for infringement. Clearly the law is being directed at black people, but to admit to such a thing, would be to admit to discriminating and breaking the law – the race relations law. So, the Home Office engaged the CRE to advise it as to how to implement this most blatantly racist piece of legislation in a non-discriminatory fashion! Lewis Carroll might be proud of the resultant gobbledygook in the guidance document for employers.

But the CRE is so worried that the new measures could mean discrimination en masse against black people, that with money from a charitable trust, it has devised a research project on internal immigration controls. It will examine the impact of section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act and to what degree local authorities, the Benefits Agency and NHS and those in charge of educational admissions are being drawn into immigration control.

The CRE wants to hear of any cases where immigration checks and controls have been carried out by employers or providers of public services, especially if individuals feel that they suffered discrimination because of them. ■

If you have any information that could be of use in this research contact Hans Kundnani on 0171 828 7022.

Anti-racist resources

Last year CARF reviewed an anti-racist education pack for young people in the north-east produced by Youth Against Racism in Europe alongside groups such as Newcastle Community Law Centre and Tyne and Wear Race Equality Council. Although it contained much useful information on fascism and some general information on racism, it lacked a black perspective on institutionalised racism. Now, in an updated version, the pack has been expanded and contains much more on the nature of racism – including immigration laws and the refugee experience, articulated through an interview with Lola Onibiyo about the struggles of her family against detention and deportation. Sections on the American civil rights movement and on the history of the black presence in Britain are particularly welcome. With its accessible magazine format, including quizzes and cartoons, the pack is an excellent tool for use in schools and youth clubs. ■

Available for £5 (£2.50 for school students or orders over 10 copies) from YRE, PO Box 858 London E9 5HU.

1996/7

CALENDAR OF RACE AND RESISTANCE

NOV 21 Eyewitness to death of Wayne Douglas tells inquest that police pounced on him 'like dogs on a cat' **NOV 25** Ethnic minorities are alienated by big companies' marketing and advertising campaigns which reinforce their exclusion, says report **DEC 2** Outrage as Police Complaints Authority announces that no officers will face disciplinary procedings for killing of Shiji Lapite... Two German neo-nazis jailed for attack on black British construction worker which left him paralysed... Leicester police figures show 16 per cent increase in reported racial incidents over six months **DEC 3** Foreign Office refuses permission for two daughters to enter Britain from Ghana for their mother's funeral **DEC 4** Nazis swamp internet site with congratulations messages to Blackburn Rovers, the only football club not to field any black players **DEC 5** Government's anti-stalking bill will also be used to protect people from racial harassment, says Home Secretary **DEC 6** Electrical engineer tells industrial tribunal that atmosphere at Vauxhall car plant in Luton was 'oppressive and intimidating' before she was sacked for wearing the hijab **DEC 9** Badrul Miah and Showkat Akbar lose appeal against convictions for their part in events leading to death of white schoolboy Richard Everitt, but vow to continue their fight for freedom **DEC 10** Black detective racially abused by colleagues and told she had 'come out of the jungle', wins £19,000 compensation... Number of asylum-seekers in detention in Britain has tripled in the last three years at a cost of £20 million a year, says Amnesty International... Asylum-seeking Kurd will be deported because new socks in his bag prove that he arrived via a safe third country, says Home Office **DEC 12** Police say Aston Villa's Mark Bosnich, who gave nazi salute to crowd during game, will not face charges **DEC 15** Home Secretary to consider new evidence which may lead to release of Winston Silcott **DEC 18** Welsh trade unionist Anne Duggan's home attacked, reportedly by C18, for her part in anti-racist campaigns **DEC 19** Red Cross says it will distribute food parcels to asylum-seekers, the first time in 50 years that it is distributing food in Britain **DEC 20** Tennis star Boris Becker say he will leave Germany to escape the racism directed at his black wife and son **DEC 22** Mike Gapes MP to introduce Private Members Bill to make Holocaust denial a criminal offence... Coroner Sir Montague Levine calls for research into police restraint methods after inquest into death of Donovan Williams at Peckham police station... Professor Richard Lynn of Ulster University unrepentant about his claim that society is threatened by a degenerate underclass which is outbreeding intelligent people **DEC 26** Home Office research shows that police officers can expect to be contaminated once every six months by their CS sprays **JAN 2** Two travellers face jail after court rules they do not have the right to park their caravans on land they own **JAN 3** Associated Examining Board study of exam marking says there may be racial prejudice in the award of grades **JAN 4** Father of seven-year old boy begins campaign for east London school to opt out because he is opposed to multi-faith religious lessons **JAN 5** Phil Critchlow, senior sales manager of Living Design kitchens and bathrooms company, tells trainee sales reps 'We don't deal with Pakis, Jews or ethnic minorities' **JAN 6** Home Office minister Timothy Kirkhope says Britain is the envy of Europe for its attitude towards race relations **JAN 7** Royal Geographical Society conference hears how government has deliberately labelled asylum-seekers as bogus to justify keeping them out **JAN 8** Most young blacks are disillusioned with politics and say they may not vote, poll shows **JAN 9** John Major begins tour of south Asia in bid to win votes from Asian Britons at general election... Police figures show one-third rise in racist incidents in Derbyshire last year **JAN 10** Three young children escape death after racist firebomb attack on their Rochdale home... Inquest into death of Kenneth Severin hears that he was stripped naked and held face down on cell floor by eight prison officers **JAN 11** Edinburgh University says it will drop disciplinary procedings against suspended lecturer Chris Brand if he agrees to resign **JAN 12** Prison Service plans to hold asylum-seekers and immigration detainees in ships to ease overcrowding on prisons... Racist attacks in the Leeds area have increased by 150 per cent in a year, says report from Leeds Racial Harassment Project **JAN 13** TGWU leader Bill Morris says Labour party has betrayed the black community by not selecting more black candidates... Blackpool football fans condemned for racist behaviour during Preston game **JAN 14** Asian shopkeepers should keep a weapon to defend themselves from attack, says judge jailing man for four years for racist attack on Asian shopkeeper **JAN 16** Diane Abbott MP says there is institutionalised racism in the NHS... Data Protection Registrar calls for code of practice to protect claimants whose data will be checked against immigration, nationality and prison records... Family of Kenneth Severin outraged by open verdict **JAN 19** British anti-racists and sports personalities married to blacks were targets of neo-nazi letter bomb plan organised in Copenhagen, say Danish police... Immigration service guidelines give officers 100 seconds to tell tourists from terrorists among arriving passengers **JAN 23** White 'victim' of Asian 'race hatred' revealed as former NF candidate after he wins court battle for rehousing **JAN 26** John Major vetoes EU plan to establish European documentation and monitoring centre on minorities **JAN 27** Ford to pay seven black workers over £70,000 compensation for race discrimination after they were turned down for jobs in elite truck drivers fleet **JAN 28** Two black waitresses win compensation after being subjected to racist abuse by Bernard Manning who was performing at an event at which they were working **JAN 29** Church leaders condemn government's treatment of asylum-seekers.

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